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ABSTRACT

The German Studies Association's guide to German studies curricula addresses the design of curricula for elementary, secondary, and postsecondary institutions in the United States. An introductory section provides background information concerning German area studies in general, and includes a definition and list of the broad educational goals of the discipline. Subsequent sections outline the significance and recommended design of programs in primary and secondary schools, teacher training, undergraduate education, graduate study, research, and foreign education and exchange. A final section discusses cooperation and coordination among related disciplines, within institutions, and at the regional, national, and international levels. A list of members of the association's task force on German studies programs and notes on the background of the guidelines are appended. (MSE)

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GERMAN STUDIES PROGRAMS

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FL 017 478

1987

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The German Studies Association is a national and international association in all fields of German studies. Its interest spans the period from early times to the present Federal Republic of Germany, German Democratic Republic, Austria, and Switzerland, and includes German and German culture in other countries. A multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary organization, the Association welcomes as members individuals whose interests involve specific or broad aspects of history, literature, politics and government, and other fields relating to German-speaking Europe.

Members of the Association receive the *German Studies Review*, a scholarly journal published three times each year and the official *Newsletter*, published twice each year. In addition, the Association holds an annual conference, usually in early October.

The *Review* contains articles and book reviews of current research in history, literature, political science, related fields, or interdisciplinary topics. Publication is in the language of submission, English or German. Members of the Association are the primary reviewers.

Membership in the Association is US$16.00 per year for members residing in the United States, CAN$20.00 for members residing in Canada, and DM 50 for residents of the European Community. To apply for membership, please write to:

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GERMAN STUDIES PROGRAMS

Guidelines for Curricular Organization
at American Educational Institutions
Developed by the

GERMAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION

1987

This document has been produced by the German Studies Association in response to expressed needs of the profession. It is intended to

— raise awareness about the value of German Studies programs at American schools, colleges, and universities;

— suggest curricular guidelines for institutions which are offering or are planning to offer programs in this interdisciplinary field, and

— furnish a format which the profession may use as a vehicle for further discussion.

The Association is aware that certain differences prevail between education in the United States and in Canada. While these guidelines primarily address education in the United States, they can be adapted with minor modifications to circumstances in Canada.

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I. BACKGROUND

International perspectives are increasingly important in the United States and form the basis of two Presidential as well as several other reports in recent years. In trade, culture, political relations, world affairs and security, travel, and numerous other areas the United States is more and more committed in an interdependent world.

Occupying the very center of Europe, the German-speaking peoples have for centuries played a crucial role in European and world affairs, a role involving them in many ways with the United States. The cultural ties between the United States and German-speaking Europe span centuries and are as varied as the musical themes heard in symphony halls, the literature and philosophy that help shape our lives, the architecture of our communities and societies. Even our scientific and technological achievements are interrelated.

More than forty years after World War II, the four German-speaking countries of Europe have not only developed their own distinctive characteristics but have also become important participants in the affairs of the contemporary world. The Federal Republic of Germany is the third major trading partner of the United States, a strong ally in NATO, and a linchpin in the European Community. The German Democratic Republic is a major industrial power in COMECON and a vital component of the Warsaw Pact. Austria and Switzerland are neutral countries whose modern economies contribute to European prosperity.

These realities mandate appropriate programs in American colleges and universities. They have led during the last decade to a new interest in German Studies, where interdisciplinary cooperation has brought together scholars of culture, society, history, politics, economics, and other fields.

At the same time, the United States is experiencing a shortfall of interculturally trained individuals capable of functioning successfully in the new world environment. This shortfall is especially crucial for relations with the German-speaking areas of Europe. The generation involved in immediate post-World War II relations with Europe is retiring from public and academic life. Existing university programs are not yet producing adequate replacements, even as the challenge to train individuals to compete successfully in international business and politics is growing.

Although English is widely used in international communications, intercultural competence and the ability to speak foreign languages are essential for deeper mutual understanding and for the development of lasting relationships, both personal and professional. German is of particular significance because it is the only language bridging the East/West separation of Europe.

German Studies has begun to address this growing need. During the last decade, over 100 academic programs with a German Studies focus have been created, with new ones added each year. This growth has been accompanied by scholarly conferences, publications, and by the success of the German Studies Association.

Many of the academic programs are, however, quite small and have been developed without clearly outlined academic or professional goals. Programs vary greatly with respect to purpose, degree of proficiency in the German language required, composition of courses, and administrative structure. The following guidelines are intended to bring about greater uniformity, to establish clearer standards and aims, and to encourage stronger growth of German Studies in America.

II. DEFINITION

German Studies is the interdisciplinary study of the contemporary cultural, social, economic, and political life of the German-speaking peoples in their historical and international context.

III. EDUCATIONAL GOALS

By developing, refining, and strengthening programs in German Studies, American academic institutions will:

A. make a significant contribution to liberal educational and intercultural competence;

B. prepare students for professions and careers, both in the United States and in international settings;

C. prepare future school and college teachers to meet the changing needs of the United States;

D. enrich disciplines participating in German Studies;

E. foster interdisciplinary research;

F. meet information and communication needs of both the private and public sector.

IV. PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

The primary responsibility of the K-12 German teacher is language instruction. However, language teaching must go hand in hand with the introduction of the student to the area in which German is spoken. German Studies, therefore, plays a very important role in the language curriculum.

In the language class, students must be made aware of the cultural environment in which the language functions. This is an important learning process which helps students overcome ethnocentric perspectives and leads them to accept cultural diversity. It also teaches students to view their own culture critically in its relationship to others.

The significance of German Studies extends beyond its role in teaching language. The elementary and secondary German teacher is oftentimes the only resource person on German-speaking countries and cannot count on others to supply the necessary information. Since a substantial number of students may not go on to college, or if they do, may not continue to study German, teachers cannot rely on future learning. They must provide their students with enough basic information to make possible a minimum of understanding of the German-speaking area, so that they can function as informed citizens.

A. German Studies on the primary and secondary levels should be closely integrated with the language-learning process. The classroom should reflect the culture of the target area in an up-to-date, realistic fashion. The approach should be comparative, moving from the familiar home environment to the environment of the other culture.

B. In the selection of topics teachers must keep in mind the age and the maturity levels of their students. The following German Studies topics are particularly suitable in language courses:

1. home, family, school, leisure time, popular culture;

2. patterns of social behavior at home, in business, and in public;

3. economics, occupations, standard of living, social stratification;

4. geography and environment;

5. history, traditions, major political trends, structure of governments, church and state;

6. literature, philosophy, architecture, and the arts;

7. U.S. relations and contacts with German-speaking countries;

8. immigration from German-speaking countries to America, with special concern for local ties.

C. Curricular and extra-curricular activities should reinforce a realistic picture of the contemporary scene and provide a sober appraisal of the past. As far as possible, students and teachers should establish contacts with peer groups abroad.

D. German teachers should work with colleagues in social studies and the arts to plan joint activities and to develop cooperative teaching units. German Studies elements should be integrated with simultaneous learning experiences in other classes (e.g. European history, German history, Global Studies). Interdisciplinary courses or units including students with no knowledge of German should also be considered.

E. Textbooks should reflect a current and realistic image of the German-speaking countries and should be revised frequently. Consideration should be given to the need for frequent revision of teachers' manuals and to the publication of brief information sheets, updating the material contained in the texts. Teachers' manuals should also contain suggestions where further information may be obtained.

V. TEACHER TRAINING

A. The primary responsibility of the German teacher is to teach the German language.

B. Because the German teacher also has the main responsibility for German Studies instruction, and may be the only person in the school or community with expertise in the area, the teacher must be appropriately prepared, including training in the methodology of second culture education and in German Studies.

C. Ideally, the German teacher should have had extended residence in a German-speaking country and be familiar with current events.

D. To remain in touch with the language and current events, the teacher should participate in in-service training on German Studies subjects, make use of summer seminars and workshops abroad, or take related courses at local colleges or universities.

VI. UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION

The following section sets forth basic principles for the incorporation of German Studies into the undergraduate curriculum. The type of German Studies program feasible at a specific institution depends primarily on local resources, the institution's academic requirements, established departmental or disciplinary boundaries, and funding. For the viability of a program, however, the size of the institution and its resources are not as important as the commitment of its faculty and administration to German Studies, its ability to foster cooperation among departments, the willingness of its faculty to gain additional expertise and develop new courses, new interdisciplinary teaching materials and methodologies, and its resourcefulness in attracting visiting faculty and establishing study or exchange programs in German-speaking countries. A solid German Studies program sets high academic standards, provides a high level of language preparation, and establishes a balance of academic courses with an interdisciplinary component.

A. German Studies Components in Introductory Courses

1. Introductory language courses should contain German Studies components.

2. The German Studies components should integrate information about private and public life, environment, history and traditions, political systems, literature and the arts, U.S. relations with German-speaking countries and German-speaking immigrants from these countries.

3. College language teachers, including teaching assistants, should be trained in German Studies and be familiar with current affairs in German-speaking countries.

4. Students should be informed about and encouraged to use up-to-date sources of information about German-speaking countries (e.g. information from local and national newspapers and magazines, lectures, and film and TV presentations, bibliographical and library assignments, etc.).

B. German Studies Within General Education Programs

1. A German Studies component should be included in general courses satisfying humanities, social sciences, and arts requirements and cultural options.

2. Specific German Studies courses in English may be applied toward the fulfillment of general requirements or offered as electives.

3. Correspondence and continuing education courses in German Studies may be provided.

C. German Studies Within Other Programs

1. German Studies within other degree programs (e.g. West European/ European Studies, Internationl Relations/Studies, International Business/Economics) should have the following minimal academic requirements:

   a. German language proficiency extending beyond second-year college or equivalent high school work;

   b. German Studies units in all program core courses dealing with Europe;

   c. Additional course work in German Studies in the German department and other departments.

2. Appropriate standardized certification of language proficiency is encouraged.

3. Study/work-study/internship experience in a German-speaking country is desirable.

D. German Studies Minor or Certificate

1. German Studies minor or certificate recognizing completion of a specified program in combination with a major in a traditional discipline (e.g. German, History, Political Science) should have the following minimal academic requirements:

   a. German language proficiency extending beyond second-year college or equivalent high school work;

   b. German Studies courses selected from two or more departments with the following limitations:

      i. no more than two-thirds in any one department,

      ii. no more than one-third dealing with German literature,

iii. no more than one-half dealing with general European rather than specific German topics;

c. an integrative element, such as a senior paper or project, an independent study course, a comprehensive examination, or a senior seminar.

2. Appropriate standardized certification of language proficiency is encouraged.

3. Study/work-study/internship experience in a German-speaking country is recommended.

E. German Studies Major

1. The German Studies major should have the following minimal academic requirements:

a. German language proficiency in terms of courses equivalent to that of the traditional German major (usually language courses beyond the third college year).

b. German Studies courses selected from two or more departments with the following limitations:

i. no more than two-thirds in any one department,

ii. no more than one-third dealing with German literature,

iii. no more than one-half dealing with general European rather than specific German topics;

c. One or more integrative elements, such as a senior paper or project, an independent study course, a comprehensive examination, or a senior German Studies seminar.

2. Appropriate standardized certification of language proficiency is urged.

3. A semester or more of study/work-study/internship experience in a German-speaking country is highly recommended.

F. Double or Combined Major

The combination of German Studies with a major in another discipline is encouraged.

G. Administrative Arrangement

One of the following administrative arrangements is suggested:

1. A separate German Studies program administered by an interdisciplinary committee.

2. A German Studies program administered by a department. The establishment of a German Studies committee consisting of faculty members from cooperating departments is essential.

3. A German Studies component/option within another interdisciplinary program administered by a program committee. This program committee should include German Studies representatives from cooperating departments.

VII. GRADUATE EDUCATION

Graduate work favors concentration on one field of study, depth instead of breadth. Since graduate faculty are expected to undertake research in their respective areas, few graduate courses cross the boundaries between established disciplines. Consequently, few institutions have accumulated substantial curricular experience in German Studies.

The experience of existing graduate German Studies programs indicates that the pursuit of an interdisciplinary thematic focus is the most effective way of helping students to make their programs coherent. The study of one problem in different disciplinary settings transforms a more or less accidental grab-bag of courses into an integrated intellectual whole. A graduate degree in German Studies ought to differ from a more conventional degree by the interdisciplinary breadth of its methodology.

A. General Considerations

1. Graduate work in German Studies offers preparation for research, teaching, public affairs, international commerce, and international relations.

2. All activities should be interdisciplinary in curriculum and administration, providing linkages across fields. Cooperative instruction, such as in modular and team-taught courses, offers unique benefits to both faculty and students.

3. Development of comprehensive programs should be guided by a realistic appraisal of available resources. At present, funding, expertise, and the pool of available participants will support only a limited number of such programs.

4. The format of summer seminars and other short-term courses offers a promising alternative to regular degree programs. Instruction may be offered on an American campus or in a German-speaking country.

5. The effectiveness of international exchanges, internships, and other overseas experiences in fields such as journalism, business, and law, is enhanced by German Studies training.

6. All programs should require German-language competence commensurate with their aims and materials. For certain groups, such as historians and political scientists, this will include advanced reading skills in subject-matter areas and oral skills needed in courses or discussions in German. Prospective teachers of German have to reach advanced levels of oral proficiency.

B. M.A. Programs

1. There should be interdisciplinary faculty cooperation and a graduate German Studies committee.

2. The program should include faculty and courses from several departments.

3. An individual student's course of study should reflect one or more interdisciplinary themes.

4. The program should be integrated through colloquia, independent study courses, and/or through a thesis.

5. Students need to become acquainted with the tools for research and teaching in German Studies, including bibliography and methods of the related disciplines.

6. There is a place for a German Studies component in the masters' programs of professional schools, such as those in business, law, and music. This component could include intensive language courses, interdisciplinary summer seminars, special courses during the regular term, workshops, or internships.

C. Doctoral programs

1. Graduate institutions with appropriate interdisciplinary expertise should encourage doctoral candidates to develop a second field in German Studies.

2. This work could lead to a certificate, to a German Studies minor or, if neither is available, a minor in a related discipline.

3. The integrative aspects of German Studies and tools for research required for M.A. programs, also apply to doctoral programs. The dissertation, based on the major discipline, should reflect an interdisciplinary German Studies approach.

4. Doctoral programs with a German Studies component should provide students with training for the teaching of German Studies at the college level.

5. Before German Studies has been established as a strong interdisciplinary field at other levels of instruction, the introduction of doctoral programs with German Studies as their main focus is not recommended.

VIII. RESEARCH

Interdisciplinary research involves the interaction of differing methodologies. Like other fields of investigation which are served by more than one academic approach (e.g. health or foreign affairs), German Studies encourages the coordination of diverse disciplines. Multidisciplinary projects may yield interdisciplinary results. The need for joint discourses can be met most readily in those cases where scholars of different disciplines already employ similar methods.

A. The development of graduate programs in German Studies will encourage research efforts of a broader focus than traditional disciplinary fields. They

will foster cooperation of scholars in interdisciplinary research projects and research by individual scholars in related disciplines.

B. Funding agencies are urged to give special attention to interdisciplinary German Studies, the creation of German Studies centers, and the support of exemplary research projects.

C. In the absence of an integrated German Studies methodology, the methodologies of the component disciplines should be employed. In a number of areas, these already partially overlap.

IX. FOREIGN EDUCATION AND EXCHANGE

Educational experience in German-speaking countries and contacts with people from those countries are indispensable for all students, teachers, and scholars in German Studies.

A. Programs in German-speaking countries providing study, work-study, or internship opportunities should be expanded and supported.

B. Opportunities for faculty study and research in German-speaking countries must be available on a regular basis.

C. Students and faculty from German-speaking countries can enrich schools, colleges, and communities. Programs supporting their visits to the U.S.A. need to be strengthened.

D. Faculty exchange programs are indispensable.

E. Additional opportunities for funding the programs outlined above should be pursued at foundations, granting agencies, and appropriate public and private organizations.

X. COOPERATION AND COORDINATION

A. German Studies and Related Interdisciplinary Fields

The relationship of German Studies to other interdisciplinary fields, such as European/West European Studies and Women's Studies, and to such well-defined constituent areas as German-American, Austrian, Swiss, and

GDR Studies, should be developed on a cooperative basis at institutional and organizational levels.

B. Institutional level.

Given the interdisciplinary nature of German Studies, cooperation among individuals and among units within each institution undertaking a German Studies program is essential. There should be appropriate interdisciplinary German Studies committees at all institutions with existing or contemplated German Studies programs.

C. Regional level

Regional cooperation among institutions or regional associations is encouraged. Promising initiatives in regional information exchange, organization of special courses and workshops, and provision of access to educational and research opportunities on a cooperative basis should be vigorously pursued.

D. National level

1. The German Studies Association has created a Committee on Academic Programs for the purpose of fostering discussion, disseminating information, assisting institutions in creating and developing programs, establishing networks among scholars and institutions, and conducting other appropriate activities. Contact with this committee should be established.

2. Cooperative efforts in promoting German Studies among professional organizations such as the German Studies Association and the American Association of Teachers of German are encouraged.

3. Communication and cooperation with government agencies, the business and professional communities, and the public at large should be promoted.

E. International level

Communication and cooperation with scholarly organizations, individual scholars and groups of scholars, research, exchange, and information agencies as well as private organizations with aims related to German Studies is encouraged.

GSA TASK FORCE ON GERMAN STUDIES PROGRAMS

This document was drafted by a Task Force of the German Studies Association.

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BACKGROUND OF GERMAN STUDIES GUIDELINES

The first attempts to define the parameters of German Studies were made in the early 1980s by working groups of *Monatshefte.* The first such group met just before the 1981 MLA Convention in New York University's Deutsches Haus December 27, 1981 to deal with "German Studies as Graduate Studies." Two days later, a *Monatshefte*-sponsored panel at the MLA Convention addressed the same topic. Selected papers presented at these meetings were published in *Monatshefte* 74.3 (1982) with a call for "a better sense of definition and direction" in German Studies.

It was not until 1985, however, when a generous grant from the Staendiger Ausschuß Deutsch als Fremdsprache (StADaF) made possible the organization of a task force to draft a set of guidelines. The task force met October 3-4, 1985, prior to the ninth annual conference of the German Studies Association in Arlington, Virginia. It used as a basis for its deliberations a set of resolutions, called "Taos Theses," drafted by several of the members during a German Studies conference commemorating the tenth anniversary of the Deutsche Sommerschule von New Mexiko in Taos Ski Valley, July 3-7, 1985. The result of the Arlington meeting and subsequent editorial work were the so-called "Washington Working Papers." They were published in the *German Studies Association Newsletter* and sent to all identified German Studies Programs and interested colleagues for their critiques and suggestions. Respondents are acknowledged below.

The final guidelines were worked out by the task force preceding the tenth annual conference of the GSA in Albuquerque, New Mexico, September 24-25, 1986, again with financial support from StADaF. The GSA Executive Committee decided at its meeting during the conference to establish a Committee on Academic Programs to carry out the recommendations.

The GSA task force gratefully acknowledges the help of the following persons in the preparation of the Guidelines. Persons whose names are asterisked participated as guests at the deliberations of the task force.

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